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7. The only real consolidation effected is in the department of institutions.

It is to be hoped that this petty tinkering will not be allowed to delay genuine reform.

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State Reorganization in Michigan. Michigan has recently undergone a make-shift state reorganization, in an effort to untangle a government whose complications were only equaled by some of the southern commonwealths.

Michigan government has been inexpensive until recent times, but has also been ineffective. It is reported that the previous organization has consisted of more than 116 distinct governmental units, which, with the use of ex-officio boards and the dissipation of authority over similar services, has scattered responsibility and made action impossible. For example, responsibility and authority for dealing with state financial problems has been distributed among every state official and board, except the lieutenant governor. Problems relating to trade and commerce have been divided among thirteen authorities. Education and related questions have been dealt with by five elective officials and boards and twenty-seven other authorities. Welfare activities were distributed among at least thirty officials.

In consequence, practically every elective official was a member of numerous ex-officio boards, in the operations of which he could take no active part. The state superintendent of public instruction, primarily responsible for the supervision of the public schools of Michigan, and a member of numerous educational boards, was also a member of the board of geological survey, the war preparedness board, the board of state auditors, the board of state canvassers, the office building board, public domain commission, the board of fund commissioners, the board of escheats, the board of control of state swamp lands, the board of claims of public land sales, and the state board of agriculture.

This situation was well understood by persons interested in government, and in 1920 the Michigan Community Council Commission, through the Institute for Public Service of New York City, presented a 200 page report dealing with Michigan's government and making tentative recommendations for reorganization. The newly elected governor, Mr. Alex J. Groesbeck, was fully aware of the shortcomings

of the state government and had in mind a reorganization program of his own. For this reason the program of the Community Council Commission was not specifically urged, in a desire not to embarrass the governor's proposals.

There is every reason to believe that the governor went into office with the intention of bringing about a through reorganization. There was no announced program, but several measures were introduced, with rumor of additional bills to follow.

After a time political opposition reached a point where apparently it seemed unwise to make further suggestions and the program was discontinued in an unfinished state.

The results of legislation secured are the creation of a state administrative board to have general supervision of all state activities, and the creation of five large departments to assume the duties formerly performed by thirty-three ex-officio boards or semi-independent officials. The state administrative board correlates the activities of the governor, the secretary of state, the state treasurer, the auditor general, the attorney-general, highway commissioner, and the superintendent of public instruction. This board has large supervisory powers over the activities of all other state departments. However, the governor retains appointive power over all principal subordinates, and has certain veto powers over the acts of the board. It has been understood that a constitutional amendment would be submitted providing for the abolition of a number of these elected officials, and for their appointment by the governor. If such intention ever existed, it was not carried out and this administrative board remains as a compromise with the short ballot principle. There are evidences, however, that the board has accomplished results. It is reported that they have assumed large authority over public expenditures, have investigated the activities of state departments, and discontinued a number of unnecessary positions.

The five departments created include the department of agriculture, under a single commissioner; the department of conservation, with a seven member board and a single commissioner; the department of labor, with three salaried commissioners; the department of public safety, with a single commissioner; and a department of welfare, with one commissioner and a seventeen member board. There is particular skepticism as to whether the anomalous situation as between non-salaried boards and salaried commissioners, as provided in the department of conservation and the department of welfare, will operate suc-

cessfully, especially as the non-salaried members and the salaried commissioners receive their appointment from the same source, the governor. Under these circumstances, it is questionable how far one may be critical of the other.

The department of public welfare, which assumes the duties of the state board of correction and charities, also has supervision over seventeen state institutions. However, these institutions are divided into four groups, each in immediate charge of a non-salaried board. These groups have charge of hospitals, prisons, the industrial schools, and the schools for educating the handicapped. In the recent past there have been biennial exposes of mal-administration in some of these institutions, ranging from financial defalcations to cruelty to inmates. If a single cause could be attached to these periodic criticisms, it would be that the members of the board of trustees living away from the institutions, and engaged in their own affairs, have not given proper care to the activities of the institutions. How far will this difficulty be obviated when, instead of a single institution, these boards have from three to seven institutions to supervise? How far can a single board commissioner detect mal-administration in a group of seventeen institutions? If mal-administration is detected, what corrective measures can be applied, when immediate responsibility lies with the board receiving their appointment from the governor?

A chart of state government under its reorganization indicates that there will remain sixteen ex-officio or semi ex-officio boards with considerable power, seven state departments, in addition to the five principal departments created, eleven examining boards, three centers of educational authority, and eight boards having control over important state activities. The thirty-three other departments have been merged into the five large departments created. But now in place of a single line of authority running from the governor to the appointee, there runs a double line of authority, that of appointment from the governor, and that of supervision from the new state board of administration.

The experience of the state administrative board as a means of correlating the authority of elected officials may be of interest to the student in government. The other efforts at state reorganization are hardly worth consideration.

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